Met Office

Winter 2014/15

The following represents an assessment of the weather experienced across the UK during Winter 2014/2015 (December, January and February) and how it compares with the 1981 to 2010 average.

For many, winter 2014/2015 will be regarded as relatively benign and quiet, especially when compared to the exceptionally stormy weather of the previous winter. Nevertheless the north of the UK bore the brunt of some significant storms in mid-December, mid-January and late February. Otherwise this was a fairly typical winter. In all three months the weather was mostly dominated by an Atlantic flow bringing a succession of low pressure systems and associated fronts, but there were spells of high pressure at the end of December and notably the first half of February. Snowfalls caused some disruption during the second half of January, but were generally unexceptional. However the Scottish mountains received large accumulations in January and February, especially in the west.

The UK mean temperature for winter was near average. The mean temperature was slightly above average for December, but near average for January and February, with anomalies of +0.5 °C, +0.1 °C and -0.1 °C respectively. Northern Ireland was the coldest part of the UK relative to average.

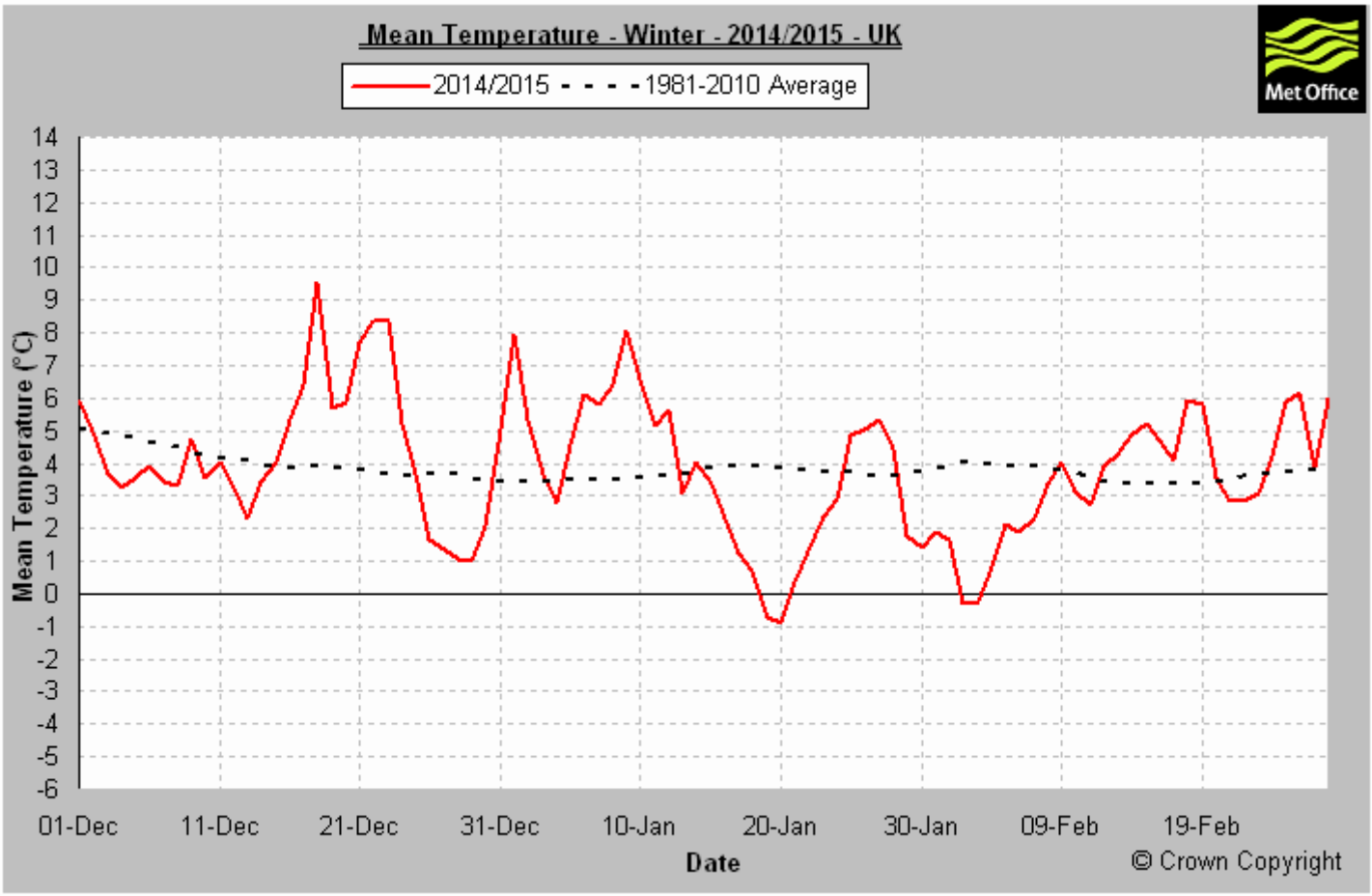
The rainfall pattern for all three months was similar, with the wettest weather across the north-west (especially western and northern Scotland) and eastern counties of England and Scotland being driest. Scotland had its sixth-wettest winter in a series from 1910 and it was especially wet across the Northern Isles. The west-east contrast resulted in some locations in the West Highlands receiving 1400mm of rain for the winter compared to only 60mm in the Vale of York. Rainfall totals in the south were mostly near or slightly below average. Rainfall totals were 110% of average in December, 127% in January and 91% in February.

This was the sunniest winter for the UK in a series from 1929, with some parts of eastern England and eastern Scotland receiving over 150% of average sunshine. Sunshine totals were 140% of average in December, 124% in January and 109% in February. In general central and eastern areas fared best, but there was slightly less sunshine than average in some western areas and it was a notably dull winter for the Western and Northern Isles.

The animation below shows the weather of winter 2014/2015 from the Met Office Unified Model. The top panel shows 250 hPa wind (corresponding to an altitude of approximately 10km coincident with the Jet Stream), and 850 hPa actual temperature. The bottom panel shows 850 hPa wind and precipitation. The animation runs from 1 December 2014 to 28 February 2015 with a 3 hour time-step. Courtesy David Fereday, Met Office Hadley Centre.

UK statistical summary

UK statistical summary		
Mean temperature	**Rainfall**	**Sunshine**
The mean value is 3.9 °C, which is 0.2 °C above the 1981-2010 average.	The total is 367 mm, which is 111% of the 1981-2010 average.	The total is 192 hours, which is 121% of the 1981-2010 average.


Mean Temperature - Winter - 2014/2015 - UK
2014/2015
1981-2010 Average
Met Office
Mean Temperature (°C)
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
-1
-2
-3
-4
-5
-6
01-Dec
11-Dec
21-Dec
31-Dec
10-Jan
20-Jan
30-Jan
09-Feb
19-Feb
Date
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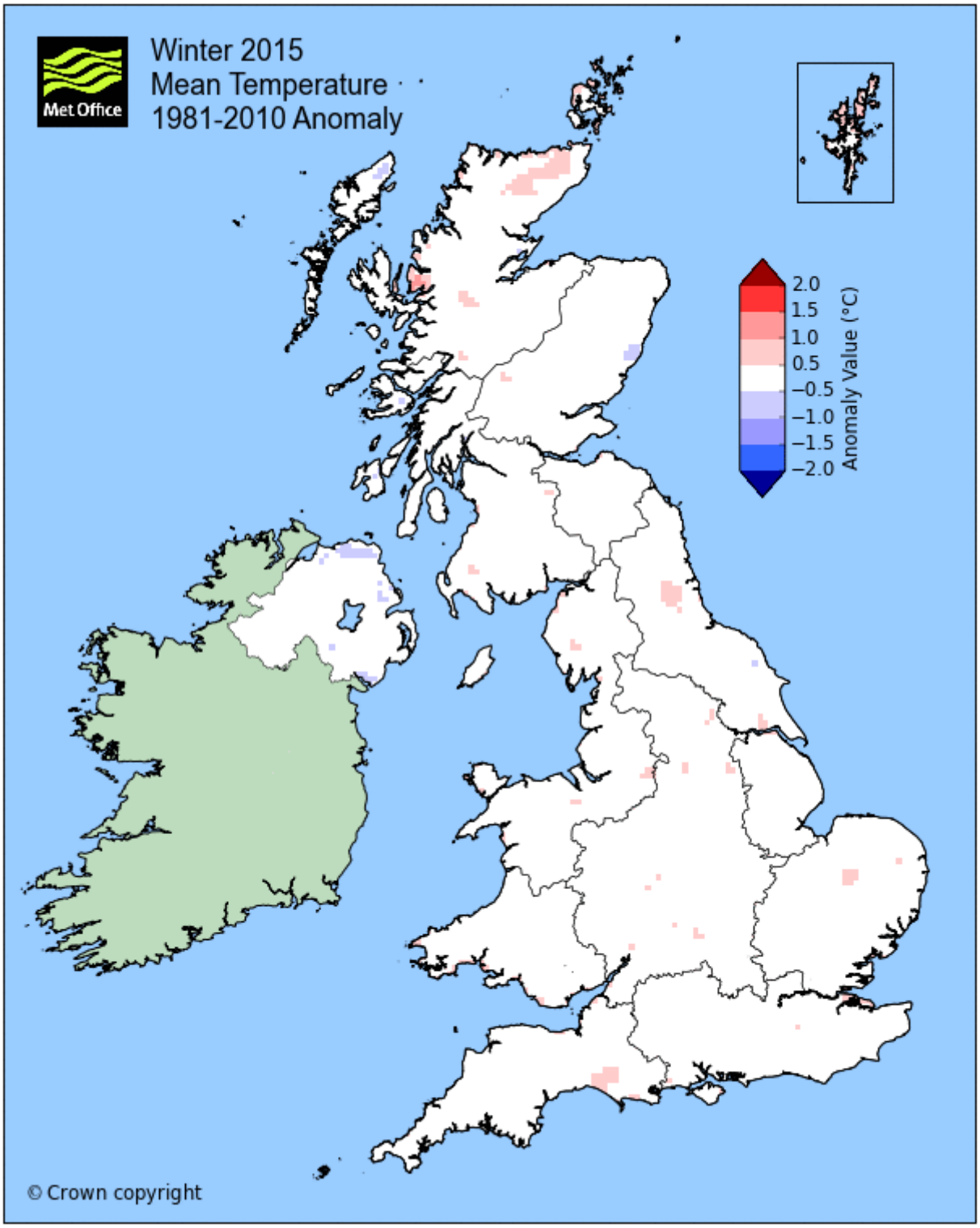
Met Office
Winter 2015
Mean Temperature
1981-2010 Anomaly
2.0
1.5
1.0
0.5
−0.5
−1.0
−1.5
−2.0
Anomaly Value (°C)
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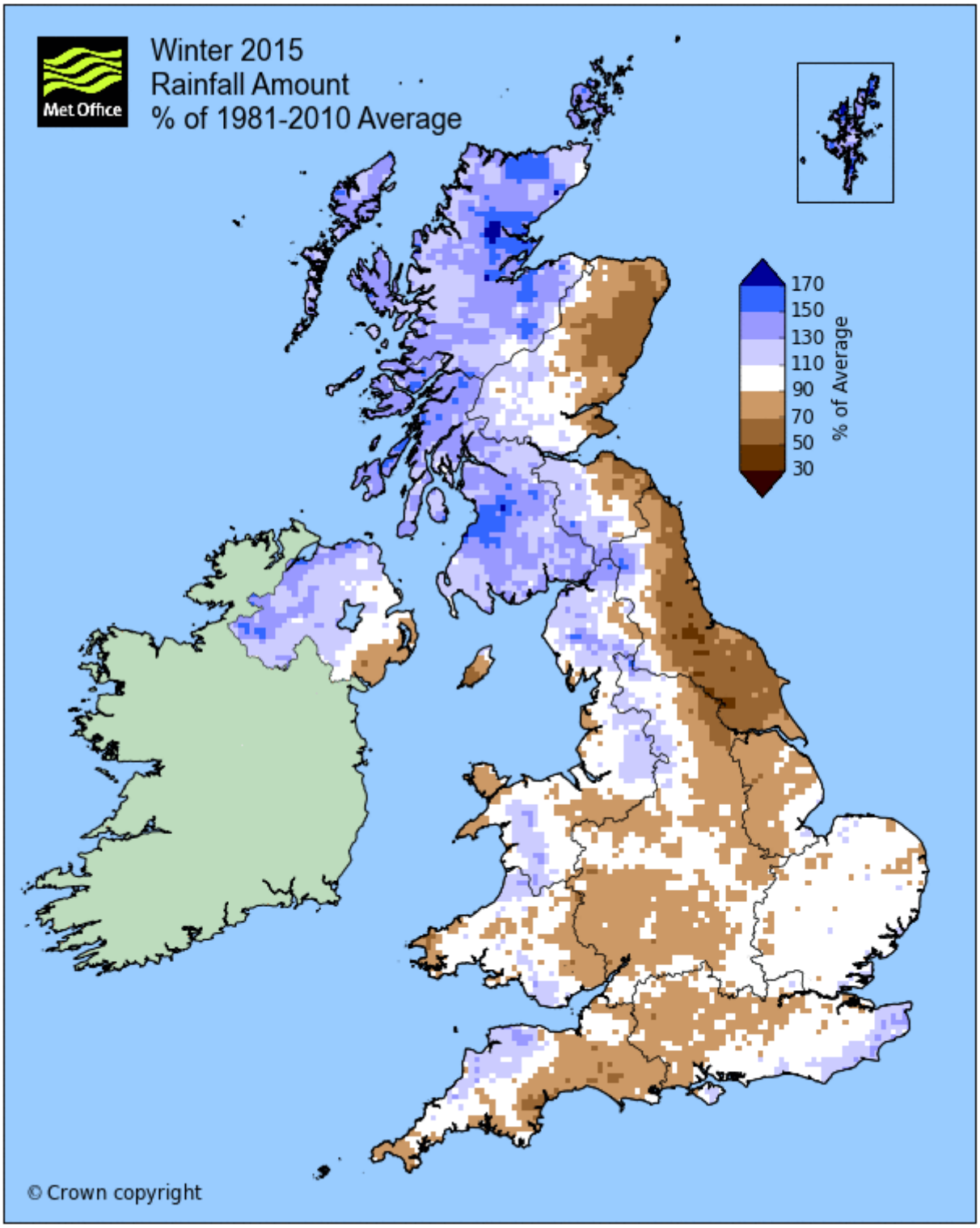
Met Office
Winter 2015
Rainfall Amount
% of 1981-2010 Average
170
150
130
110
90
70
50
30
% of Average
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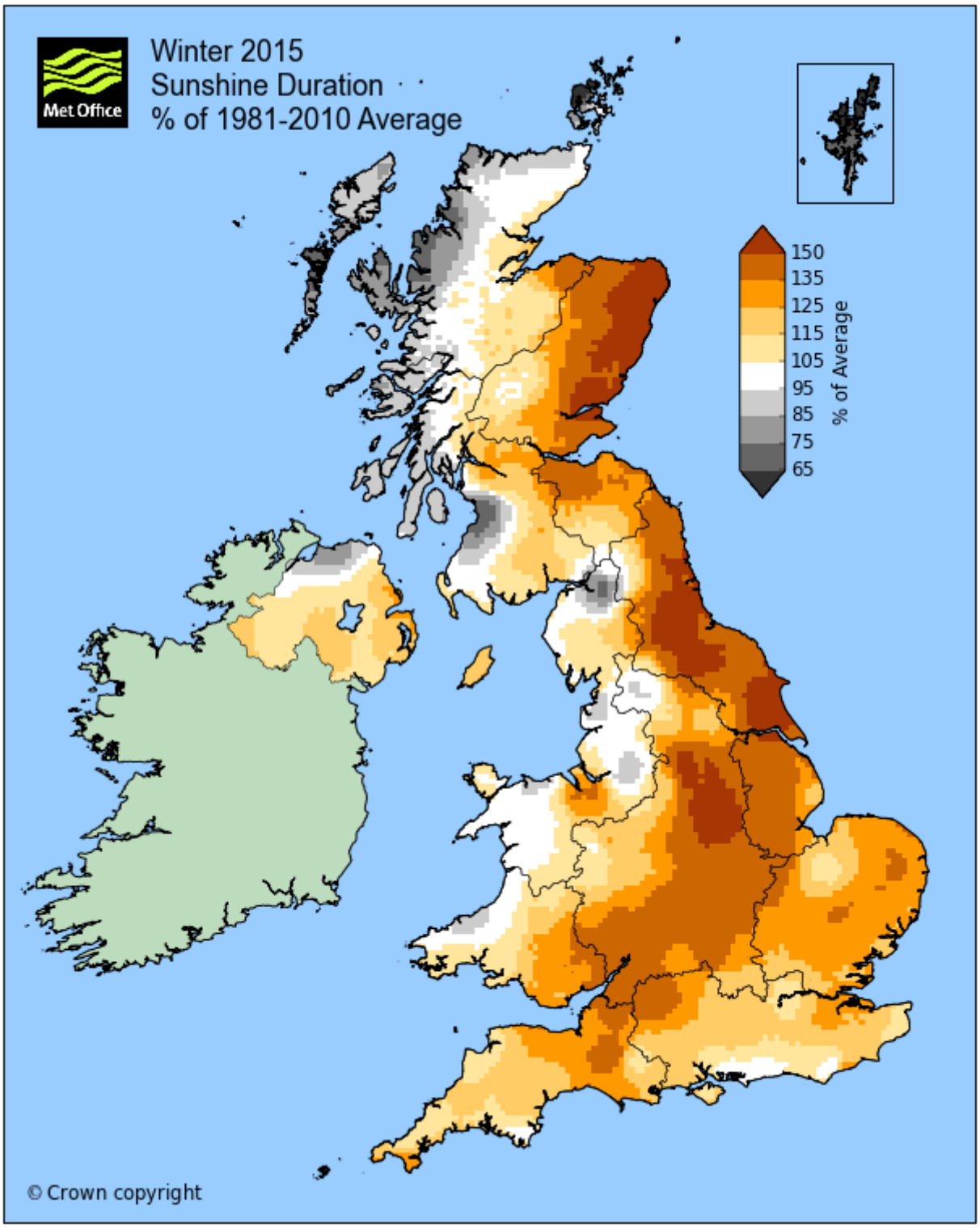

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